

Observations
upon
The common inflammatory
Dysentery
of
Our Climate.

1819

Wm. P. Fontaine
admitted April 23 1819

Observations

upon

the common infirmities

(Of the lungs)

and

1719

Wm. Richardson
Author of the


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To N. Chapman. M. D. &c, &c, &c.

This unpurport essay, is inscribed, not on account of its intrinsic merit, but as an humble tribute, and attestation of that respect, which the overflowing heart of a grateful private pupil, is proud to acknowledge. He cherishes for him, both as a man & a teacher of medicine. And that your life may be long, illustrious, & happy, is the wish, of

Your most sincere friend,
And grateful pupil:



Observations upon the common inflammatory
Dysentery

This disease is arranged by Cullen in his 1st Class (Fevers) under the 5th (Purfluens) & Genus 4th. He divides it in inflammatory catarrhs, fever, attended with frequent stools, Mucosa, Discharge, Strains, Tenesmus &c. The natural feces here for the most part retained.

As to the opinion of the pathologists of Dysentery and how different in account of the general catarrhs intestine which has been ascribed to it. The writers who consider Catarrhs Pathology of Dysentery erroneous, suppose that it is only catarrhs when accompanied with dysphasia fever & that under all the other forms, it, proceeds, either as an epidemic, or a disease produced by accidental circumstances. The symptoms of the disease as described by most writers are as follows, commencing most frequently with cold shiverings & the other symptoms of fever next the local affections appear as Strains & Tenesmus. It frequently happens that soon last make their appearance first & perhaps as frequently the disease is induced by coldness, an enormous & acute degree of flatulency want of appetite, nausea & vomiting, after these the symptoms

+ 100

[illegible]

long of flow above described appearance. Sometimes a slight
Diarrhoea is the first appearance. As the disease advances
the griping becomes more severe the evacuations more
frequent & uniformly attended by Tenesmus & Tenesmus
& flatulencies is not uncommonly an attendant. Perhaps
the pain is sometimes preceded by violent straining, such
an occurrence is usually succeeded by an aggravation of
Tenesmus & Tenesmus. The matter discharged from the in-
testines is sometimes frothy mucus, sometimes blood & mu-
cus intermixed with a cheese like substance, & sometimes
the discharge is pure blood.

These are the usual appearances of the evacuations
from the intestines during an attack of Dysentery. Occa-
sionally it happens that small intestinal pieces of fi-
ce pass off they are called Syphalar & this discharge
is usually attended with temporary relief to the
sufferer.

How much a lip marked with the usual symp-
toms of Shistos heat &c. is to be observed. That not distinguish-
ed by the same degree of fulness & activity of the pulse
as is generally to be met with in inflammatory disease.
It has been observed by most writers on this subject that

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about this time the disease seems to be disposed to come to a crisis. But it is not uncommonly the case that the critical period is much more protracted. If at this period of the disease it has not been checked it is prog up, it for the most part takes on a more dangerous form.

Added to the increase of tormina & tenismus are great addition of strength, red extremities, tension of the abdomen, red clammy sweat, frequent, Glutinous, & small febrile pulse, & an acrid discharge from the bowels similar to the wasting of meat. These are generally unfavorable symptoms. & altho' sometimes they are not followed by death; yet these are always the precursors.

The disease when it is about to terminate favorably, is attended with a remission of fever, the tongue becomes moist & relaxed, the evacuations are more natural, & less frequent, attended with very little tormina & tenismus.

There is another form of this disease spoken of by several writers upon this subject, in which there is no discharge from the bowels whatever. This variation of the bowels is supposed to be produced by the inflammation of the bowels rising to so great a height as to trans-

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the secretory points & thus to stop that function.

The Causes of Dysentery as enumerated by the different authors upon the subject, are numerous & diversified—

Then enumerated by the modern writers are as following

1st. Mucous matter and all those causes which tend to produce our autumnal fever. 2^d. The venous stagnation in the state of the atmosphere.

3rd. Acute matter taken into the stomach.

4th. A peculiar state of the atmosphere, prevailing in Epidemic Dysentery.

5th. Cholera causes periperal irritation.

It has been stated that Dysentery frequently alternates with Catarrh & Rheumatism & from this fact has by some been considered as Catarrh or a Rheumatic affection of the intestinal canal. This however is a fact fully clearly ascertained (whatever may be the cause of Dysentery) that it is a highly inflammatory fever similar to the alimentary canal. The pathology of the disease is proved by the fact, that it appears at different times the type of Intermittent, Remittent, and continued. This last is either highly inflammatory or Spasmodic of the typhus magnitude. The primary &

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proximal seat of the disease when it proceeds from morbid effluvia is the stomach; which is indicated by the symptoms of nausea & vomiting that are usually present. The morbid action is from this point, extended throughout the whole course of the alimentary canal. From inspecting it appears that the focus of the disease is dependent upon the large intestines.

Treatment. It is evident, of what has been said of the Pathology of Dysentery be correct, that the indications for its cure are first to remove inflammation & effluvia, secondly to relieve the constriction of the alimentary canal, & lastly to restore to the surface its normal healthy condition & to the interior their proper tone & activity.

Must the first indication the most efficacious remedy is blood letting.

By thus early resorting to the lancet, we check the inflammation & render the system more susceptible to the operation of our remedies. It is usual with many practitioners, even of the present day to commence the cure of dysentery with an emetic as was anciently by Hippocrates. But the universal correctness of

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such a practice is very equivocal. The cases to which emetics are best adapted, are those arising in mismanage-
ment & attended by symptoms of gastric disten-

The most easy removal of this disease, when symptoms are not present, or if they are, they do not exist in great degree as to require the use of emetics. The practice in these cases as I have before said is to commence with some saline. This being done the next remedies to be resorted to are purgatives, and of these the one which is best adapted to the case seems to be a mixture of dissonant salts, some purging castor oil, another, calomel, & others again the neutral salts, or some other of the purgating jalap Rhubarb &c. There are cases however in which they may all be used with advantage, and even in the same case there are stages of the disease in which they may each be used with some advantage. Castor oil is the purgative which by most practitioners is used. But in cases where active purging is required and where there is a great determination of bile to the intestines, Calomel combined with Rhubarb or with its more usual concomitant Jalap is the cathartic in which I should place the greatest reliance. The neutral

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sels seem to be best adapted to these cases & the case
which are of a milder form & unattended by, bilious dis-
charges. In these cases they are preferable to all other pur-
gatives — They act promptly, especially & are not followed
by that state of prostration & debility which is of-
ten observable after the operation of some of the more
stercoric purgatives. Another advantage which they
have over most other purgatives, is that they are not
so offensive & irritating to the stomach; & consequently
can be repeated & taken when the irritability
of that viscus the exhibition of every other purgative al-
most is violent. — To answer them effectual they
should be given in large doses from ℥ij to ℥ij or 3
according to circumstances should be given in the
course of the day.

Much has been said by practitioners of every age
against the use of greens in this disease. But un-
happy as it is to the generally received opinion I am
not to believe that it is necessary to the use of Opun-
taria as Cathartic Medicines. In any case to the use
of a violent attack.

Exacerbated by the action & success of any sort of

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kind & precept Doctor Charles Morris of Virginia;
I was led to make a trial with this article in about
twenty five cases which came under my care last sum-
mer. As which having given it a fair trial, I had
the amplest evidence of its efficacy. The method that
I pursued in its administration; was to give regular-
ly in the intermission between the doses of purga-
tive medicines, that I had occasion to use during the
course of the disease, from half a grain to one & a
half or two according to the urgency of the case.

By commencing thus early with the use of grime I
was enabled to mitigate the sufferings of the patient
by allaying Fermina & Tenismus to prevent the
increase in the inflammation of the bowels pro-
voked by the repeated straining, abating the frequently
abortive attempts to evacuate the contents of the in-
testines & to determine to the surface & thereby relieve the
spasm of the rectum & sigmoid.

The effect which last instance a small quantity
of Tartar Emetic or Spese combined with the grime
is of no small advantage. Spese is by most medical
men preferred to the Emetic Tartar for this purpose.

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An objection has arisen with many to the use of opium in this disease on account of its stimulating property. This to a superficial observer would appear a very plausible objection. But what scratching with pruritus & perspiration is found to be a very tedious return to stimulation the only effect produced by opium when administered to a human being I don't believe adopt the same opinion. But this is well known to every man acquainted with the medicine not to be a fact. It is capable of producing other effects than this & not less manifest. Among the leading of which is its anodyne & sedative property. And to this property we attribute its ability in a very great degree in Dysentery.

By this power it not only tranquilizes the suffering patient but produces other effects that are almost incalculable. I have given it attended by ~~the~~ warm fomentations to the abdomen to a person labouring under the most violent inflammation, pain, spasms & fever, with the effect not only of relieving the pains & spasms but also apparently of abating the

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It has been a point of much discussion amongst medical men. How far purging ought to be carried in this disease. This point, however, I believe is fully well ascertained at present. And by mutual consent it is determined that purging ought to be continued until the intestines are freed from all noxious matter & restored to their natural evacuation.

At this stage of the disease when the obstructions canal has been sufficiently removed & the distressing symptoms have been wholly or partially removed, the inference would naturally arise that diaphoretics were the remedies next demanded.

The medicine used for this purpose by most practitioners & particularly recommended by Sympson Chapman is Ipecac. By him it is exhibited in combination with Calomel & Opium in the following proportion.

R. Gum Opii grs	} made into a full & powerful doses every 2, 3 or 4 hours as may be required.
Pulv. Ipecac. grs 1	
Pulv. Nuxiata Hydrarg. grs 4	

This preparation, he remarks is not equal in efficacy

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other powers to many other accidents & preparations but at this time it produces effects which are of more importance than mere diaphoresis. It gently opens the bowels, allays internal irritation, relaxes the surface & produces other effects that are highly salutary in their consequences: such as the change it produces in the intestinal & hepatic Secretions.

If a more powerful diaphoretic should be required the Ethers now so may be used.

But there are very few cases in which this preparation is to be preferred to the foregoing — In those cases attended with discharges of pure blood, the preparation of Quina, Sassa, & calomel is supposed to be calculated with peculiar advantage.

Several other means of exhibiting Sassa in Solution have been proposed & used. Clark used it in injection. Boiling 3ij of Sassa in two pint of water which decoction he recommends to be used as an injection. Playfair gave it in doses of from ʒj to ʒj with 30 or 50 drops of laudanum combined with it. These however are not to be compared with that form of which we first spoke. The decoction more practi-

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clearly is demonstrable. So I have always been inclined
to believe the doctrine of Spence was entirely correct.

Now Grease produces its beneficial effects in
Dysentery is a matter enveloped in great doubt &
uncertainty. Some have ascribed its efficacy to its purgative
property, whilst others said that it depended upon
its Siaphorachi property. But to both of these concep-
tions it may be objected, that if such were the fact
other substances possessing those properties in a
greater degree would be found more efficacious than
Grease, which is the strongest objection to both.

This however is not the fact. & we are compelled
to acknowledge our ignorance of its modes of ac-
tion. I like the empiric to be governed only by
the light of past experiences in our practice.

Auxiliary means in the stage of the disease
just described may be derived from the appli-
cation of warmth to the surface. If this stage
of remedies are the warm bath, & warm fomen-
tations. &c. and internal. &c.

One of these means I expect of no so general
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The warm bath is a remedy of considerable importance in this disease; but in consequence of the inconvenience which attends its administration, it is almost entirely disused from the practice of the present day.

In the case of children, this objection does not apply & in such cases it may be used with very great benefit, & even with convenience. Of late however a remedy has been introduced, which seems likely to supersede the use of every other of the kind. It is the flannel roller. It acts by supporting the abdominal muscles, by keeping up an equable temperature &c. Blistering is another remedy used with great benefit, in this disease. The indications for them are violent inflammation of the intestines, tension of the abdomen, a contracted dry skin &c. Administered in this stage, after previously evacuating the intestines, and employing counteraction, they are attended with the most salutary effects. They tend to relax the surface & to abate the violence of intestinal inflammation and irritation. Some difference of opinion seems to exist relative to the part to which they ought to be applied. Some contending that they ought

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to be used in the extremities, others on the contrary say
that without doubt they ought to be applied to the ab-
domen. There are however states of the system in this dis-
ease in which blisters are useful applied in both of these ways.
They may be used to the extremities to arouse the
system from torpor and insensibility. To the abdomen
when you wish to make an impression on the disease.

We have now nearly completed our remarks upon
Dysentery. But before we conclude it will be neces-
sary to say something relative to certain local affections
(such as *Formosa* & *Tenues*) that demand our attention.

As regards *Formosa*, I more especially if it be atten-
ded with putrid & acid accumulations in the intestines
(which is often the case) the use of the
following prescription has been recommended.

R. <i>Blas. Runci</i> ℥i	} This is to be dissolved to- gether and a large table spoon ful given every 1, 2 or 3 hours
<i>Gum Arabic</i> ℥j	
<i>Leaf Sugar</i> ℥ij	
<i>Sweet Thyme</i> : 50 or 60 grs	
<i>Mint, or cinnamon water</i> q.s.	

Even better than the above says Dr. Chapman
is the following

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Calend. magnific. 7j

Laudanum XV, 90

Leaf Sage 3j

Water 3ij m

The dose of this mixture is a dessert
spoonful, given every 2 or 3 hours.

In this case likewise the combination of Opium & Opium is
very useful. 1 gr. of each is the dose. As a remedy for the
morbus & Tenismus an injection composed of a solution of Haec
with a little Laudanum, or a pill of Opium consisting
of 2 or 3 grs. introduced into the rectum are very good
remedies.

Dr. Chapman tells us that, of all the means he
has hitherto used to alleviate the distressing symptoms
of Morbus & Tenismus an injection of fresh butter melted
is the best adapted to the case. The quantity is from
1/2 a pint to 2 pints. A compound of vinegar & salt
amongst the vulgar is a very common remedy. Indeed
it is a remedy of some consequence. I have seen a case
of this disease in which many other remedies were used
together with this, but benefit seemed only to follow
its use.

Of the use of mercury in this disease, given to me

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duce salivation. I have no experience. Some practitioners
recommend it very highly, whilst others speak in doubt-
ful terms of it. However high the commendations that
have been bestowed upon it, I should not be disposed to
resort to it often.

That it would prove effectual I have no doubt.
But as long as we have it in our power, to cure the dis-
ease by means that are less violent in their operation
I should never resort to it. As a dernier resort it may
be had recourse to, but, unless in other circumstances in
this form of Dysentery.

Diet As this is a disease of high inflammatory ac-
tion, it becomes a matter of primary importance to attend
to the diet of the patients. A very low diet should be
prescribed, consisting of articles possessed of as little ir-
ritative action as possible. Such as Slippery Elm Tea,
Barley or Rice water, Oxal acid Tea, Taspine, Pape &
The use of these drinks throughout the whole course
of the disease will be attended with no inconsiderable
benefits. They promote perspiration, given in a rapid
state. & insure also as nourishment.

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Dyonting

John W. Callmont
Delaware

113 Arch Street

admitted March 30th 1820

vide Minutes of Faculty

Dyonting

Sept 1891

John W. Brown
Columbus

about the March 20th 1891
with Minister of State